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TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Membership

Representative Dan Gattis



Biographical Information

State Representative Dan Gattis, a sixth generation Texan, serves the people of House District 20 as their voice at the Capitol since first being elected in November 2002. Representative Gattis' district in many ways mirrors Texas as a whole. The district is home to some of the fastest growing cities in the nation, such as Cedar Park, Georgetown, and Round Rock, which are centered in the high-tech industry. The district also includes bedrock agricultural communities, such as Cameron and Rockdale, which help feed the world. Nineteen school districts are in HD 20 and educate approximately 50,000 students.

Within less than a month after being sworn in as a freshman legislator, Representative Gattis was selected by the Speaker of the House, Tom Craddick, to serve in a key leadership role as Vice Chair of the Civil Practices Committee. In that leadership role, Gattis helped pass historic legislation curbing lawsuit abuse and restoring integrity to the Texas civil justice system. He also serves on the powerful State Affairs Committee which hears most of the legislation concerning state policy. As a member of that committee Gattis helped pass several legislative measures that positively impact women, children and families.

Representative Gattis serves on two prestigious national legislative policy work groups. He is one of two Texas House members on the Agriculture & Rural Development Committee of the National Conference of State Legislators. An integral part of the committee's focus is water conservation and long-term water planning. Gattis is the House Delegate to the American Legislative Exchange Council's Education Task Force, which is examining the effectiveness of various educational reforms. Additionally, concern over how various societal forces impact families has led Representative Gattis to chair the Texas Conservative Coalition's Families First Task Force. It is anticipated that this task force will recommend various legislative solutions in order to encourage greater value on families and help stem the erosion of the traditional nuclear family.

Since taking office in 2003, Representative Gattis affected the passage of several key bills into law. Some of these measures include:

- Children's Advocacy (HB 263/joint author): strengthens the ability of children's advocacy centers throughout the entire state to assist child victims.
- Consumer Protection (HB 1131/coauthor): prohibits insurance companies from having financial interests in auto body repair shops.
- Curbing Lawsuit Abuse (HB 4/coauthor).
- Protecting Pregnant Women from Wrongdoers (SB 319/coauthor of companion House Bill 246): establishes a "Laci Peterson" law in Texas.
- Protecting the Sanctity of Marriage (SB 7/coauthor of companion House Bill 38): provides that Texas only recognizes marriage as being between a man and a woman.
- Strengthening the "Right to Carry" licensure law (SB 501/coauthor of companion House Bill 878): clarified and strengthened the concealed weapon licensure law.
- Tax Relief for Seniors & the Disabled (HB136/joint author): allows local governments the option of freezing the property tax rate on the homesteads of senior citizens and the disabled.
- Texas State University, Round Rock (HB 2522/joint author): establishes a public higher education campus in Williamson County.
- Truth-in-Taxation (SB 392/House sponsor): restores to taxpayers in certain water districts, such as municipal utility districts (MUDs), the right to receive from the district's governing body a notice of any proposed tax increases and the right to petition for a rollback election.

Born into a family of public school teachers with deep Williamson County roots and a product of Texas public schools, Gattis graduated in 1990 from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture Economics. At Texas A&M he excelled at student leadership by serving as class president and in the student senate. He was also a member of the famed Corps of Cadets and was selected into the Ross Volunteers, the Governor's ceremonial honor guard. After undergraduate school, Gattis attended South Texas College of Law where he received his Juris Doctor degree. After practicing law in Houston for two years, he returned to Williamson County where he was a prosecutor for seven years. Gattis first tried cases as an assistant county attorney and in that capacity he also drafted the county's first manual concerning domestic violence. Later, he worked as a prosecutor in the district attorney's office where he tried cases involving both violent and white collar crimes. Currently, in addition to attending to his legislative duties, he maintains a private law practice in Georgetown. Gattis also ranches on the family home place where they raise registered Beefmaster cattle.

Representative Gattis is married to the former Shana Lee Nugent, who grew up in Tyler and is also a graduate of Texas A&M with a degree in elementary education. Together with their one year old son, Sterling Jack, they reside in the Jonah Community and are active members of the First Baptist Church of Georgetown.